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# ETUCE

## European Trade Union Committee for Education EI European Region

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Brussels, 30 April 2020

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**Subject: Solidarity with ETUCE member organisations DOE and OLME**

Dear Minister,  
Dear Prime Minister,  
Dear Presidents,  
Dear General Secretaries,  
Dear Leaders of political parties,

The European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) represents 132 education trade unions i.e. 11 million teachers in Europe. As a recognised Social Partner in education at EU level, ETUCE meets at regular intervals with the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) in the frame of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education to negotiate and discuss education and employment topics relevant to teachers, academics and other education personnel in education. ETUCE is a European Trade Union Federation within ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation. ETUCE is also the European Region of Education International (EI), the global federation of education trade unions.

It is with resentment that ETUCE member organisations in Greece, the Greek Primary Teachers' Federation (DOE) and the Greek Federation of Secondary State School Teachers (OLME), informed us about the Ministry of Education's plans to table a controversial Bill excluding prior consultations with education social partners.

Expressing robust solidarity with its member organisations in the country, ETUCE shares DOE's and OLME's deep indignation, in particular with the timing chosen to introduce comprehensive changes that risk to substantially alter and disrupt the Greek education system at all levels.

In times when the whole world is facing an unprecedented health, social and economic crisis, the support for teachers is vital. Teachers have had to rapidly adapt to current circumstances showing strong dedication, responsibility and competencies to provide students with quality education remotely to the best of their ability whilst many schools and other education institutions have been closed to slow the spread of COVID-19..

Further to this, ETUCE expresses its big concern regarding the neglect of engaging and fully involving education social partners in the preparation of this reform in a meaningful way. This represents an evident violation of the very principles of social dialogue. In its [standards](#) the ILO emphasises that a climate of trust, built through social dialogue and tripartism, will be essential in the effective implementation of measures to address the COVID-19 outbreak and its consequences. To address the ongoing COVID-19 crisis which has an imminent and tremendous socio-economic impact on societies in Greece and Europe as a whole, the Greek Government should guarantee continuous and transparent consultations, active involvement of social partners and strong cooperation between the Ministry of Education and education trade unions. In times of recessions that risk to lead to great instability in societies, the respect for and safeguard of fundamental principles inherent in the European Union is more critical than ever. Thus, ETUCE reminds you that one of the twenty key

principles of [the Pillar of Social Rights](#) stresses that the support for increased capacity of social partners to promote social dialogue shall be encouraged.

In the ETUCE COVID-19 [statement](#) we reiterate that while the responsibility of the protection of education personnel lies with governments and education employers, in all matters pertaining to the performing of duties of education personnel, social dialogue and collective bargaining must remain central in the adaptation of the education sector to these circumstances.

At a time when partnership and cooperation amongst social partners is crucial to tackle the many emerging and rapidly changing challenges that teachers and other education personnel are facing, ETUCE calls on the Greek Government to regard its obligation and responsibility and step up its commitment to work together with the education social partners.

ETUCE urges you to constructively work together with education trade unions especially in this unprecedented situation. We support our members, the education trade unions DOE and OLME in their request that a meaningful dialogue with the Ministry of Education precedes the submission of the Bill to the Parliament for a vote allowing time and the ability for education trade unions to table comprehensive proposals

We continue to closely monitor the developments.

Yours Sincerely,



Susan Flocken  
European Director

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